

A NEW SPECIES OF *MISSULENA* (CTENIZIDAE - ARANEAE)

by

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(Figures 1-4)

This paper describes a new species of spider of the genus *Missulena* Walckenaer, 1805 (*Ctenizidae - Araneae*).

When right or left hand is mentioned it should be borne in mind that the spider was examined facing away from the Observer, and the position calculated when looking down on the dorsal surface.

MISSULENA PRUINOSA, sp. nov.

DESCRIPTION—

Holotype: ♂.

Cephalothorax broadly ovate, black, shining, devoid of hairs, finely granular, rear margin slightly incised; 6.3 mm. wide x 5.5 mm. long. Thoracic fovea strongly procurved, deep, with a shallow groove running from the fovea to the posterior margin. Radial grooves wanting. Pars cephalica high, rising steeply from pars thoracica.

Ocular area 4.0 mm. wide x 1.0 mm. long. Anterior median eye on raised tubercle, each eye 0.4 mm. dia., half their diameter apart. Anterior lateral eye elliptical, raised, their longest diameter 0.5 mm., separated from anterior median eye by 1.5 mm. Posterior lateral eye slightly raised, elliptical, longest diameter 0.3 mm. Posterior median eye rounded, but truncated posteriorly, greatest diameter 0.2 mm., separated from each other by 2.1 mm. (Fig. 2). Anterior row of eyes slightly recurved, posterior row strongly recurved. Anterior margin of posterior median eye almost level with posterior margin of anterior median eye.

Chelicerae black, granulated, shining, devoid of hairs on dorsal surface except on apex, robust, curving downwards, with 3 small teeth followed by 5 large and 3 small on inner margin of furrow on ventral surface, and 9 very small teeth followed by 2 large on outer margin, counted from the base towards the apex (Fig. 1). Rastellum consisting of 10 large spines, concolorous with chelicerae. Fang curved and shining, 2.5 mm. long.

Labium much longer than broad, 1.0 mm. wide x 1.8 mm. long, oval, dark brown, devoid of spines but sparsely covered with brown hairs.

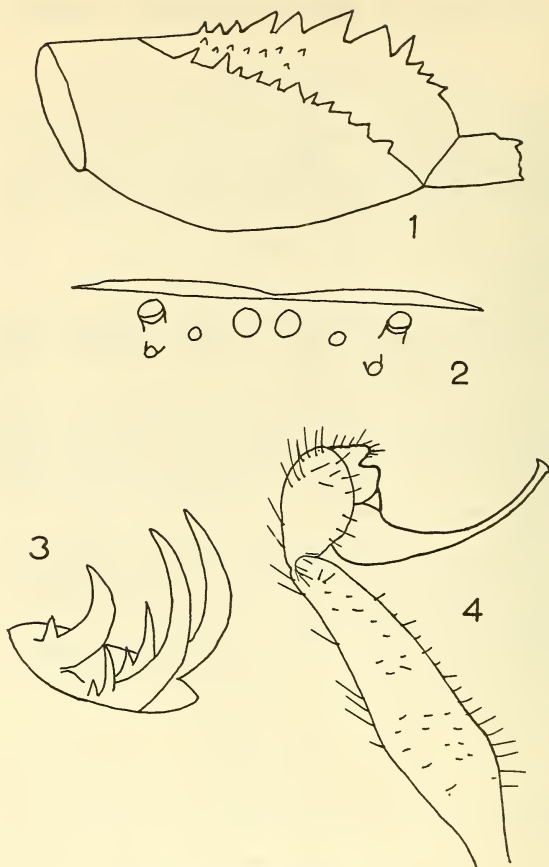
Maxillae almost square, with large lobe at anterior angle, dark brown, with scopula of reddish hairs on anterior margin.

Sternum 3.5 mm. long x 3.6 mm. wide, dark brown. Posterior sigillae deep, but ill-defined; remaining pairs of sigillae indistinct.

Legs relative lengths 4: 1: 2: 3, dark brown, with a scopula of light brown hairs on ventral surface of both metatarsi and tarsi of legs 3 and 4; 3 claws on each tarsus, one or two pectinations on superior claws, the number varying even on the same leg on the opposite side; inferior claw with one pectination (Fig. 3).

Spines a distinct pad of spines resembling an accessory rastellum on anterior side of patella 1, a smaller pad of spines on patella 2. Whole of dorsal surface of patella 3 covered with spines; only one or two spines on patella 4. All tibiae, metatarsi and tarsi with long spines. No spines on femurs.

Palpi dark brown, the tibiae having long hairs but no spines. Genital bulb light brown, with style rounded, tapering and darker towards apex (Fig. 4).



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Fig. 1. Chelicera showing dentition.

Fig. 2. Eye arrangement.

Fig. 3. Tarsal claws, 2nd leg on right hand side.

Fig. 4. Palp, palpal bulb and style.

Abdomen 7.0 mm. long, obovate, overhanging base of cephalothorax, whitish on the dorsal surface, sparsely covered with extremely short, dark brown spine-like hairs on the anterior side, becoming longer towards posterior. Ventral surface grey with whitish mottling, covered with long brown hairs; sides concolorous with ventral surface.

Spinnerets superior spinnerets short, first segment longest, last shortest and conical. Inferior spinnerets narrow, cylindrical.

MATERIAL EXAMINED—

Three specimens of this spider have been seen by me, but only one is available for description. It was captured at Angurugu Mission, Groote Eylandt in the Gulf of Carpentaria on the 23rd November, 1965, by Miss D. C. Levitt.

The Holotype is lodged in the Australian Museum, Sydney, registered no. K. 68,593.

DISCUSSION—

The specimen described above differs from all described species of *Missulena* in colouring and in the pectinations on the tarsal claws, and from all except *Missulena bradleyi* Rainbow in the hairs on the abdomen. It differs from all except *Missulena occatoria* Walckenaer and *M. bradleyi* in the spining of the legs. Although it is closest to the latter spider, it is distinguished by the dentition of the chelicerae, and the spines forming the rastellum of *M. pruinosa* are shorter than those of *M. bradleyi*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT—

I wish to thank my husband, M. H. Gregg, for the drawings accompanying this paper.
